

"And, continuing, the Kasihta said 'We came out of the center of the earth.' The Coweta answered 'We came out at the same place but, the root of a tree extending in front of us, we emerged only after a delay.' Then they learned that they had been created one people. And they said 'We shall have to return again the way we came, and when we reach the place of our creation we shall be annihilated.' The names of the two rivers near that town were Big River (Hátcí Lako) and Confluent River (Hátcí Afa'ski). 173 539

"There was a place for killing fish at that point; it was found out that it was a place to which fish would come. The Kasihta having found it broke off a pine limb and laid it upon a rock. And the Coweta found it afterward and broke off a black weed called *ata'k la-lasti*³⁰ and laid it down in the same place. Then the Coweta said 'I have found a fish-killing place.' The Kasihta said 'I found it first. I broke off a pine limb to mark it and laid it upon a rock.' And the Coweta said 'I, too, broke off a black weed and laid it there.' They wrangled with each other about it. Then they said to each other 'Let us examine the place.' And when they went to see the marks they found two lying there. When they had examined the matter they found two fish-killing places close together and one was abandoned to the Coweta. Near by was their own fish-killing place where they lived catching and eating fish. They continued there, beginning and carrying on things for their amusement. There they built their big house.³¹ They erected four structures which they called houses (*tcuko*). They placed one to the west, another across from this,³² another toward the south, another toward the east,³³ and another toward the north. They made the length [of each] eighty times the length of a person's foot and the breadth thirty times. And they made the measure of the arena between them eighty foot-measures each way. The round big-house stood toward the west.³⁴ They constructed it with a pointed roof, and they covered it with pine bark stripped from the trees. They made only one door, looking toward the east. And they built a fire exactly in the middle so that when it was raining or snowing they could dance there. And in the one of the four houses which stood toward the west the miko of the tribe sat with his vice-chief (*apokta*). It was called the house of the mikos (*mi'kálgí i'ntchuka*). And those who sat in the house to the south were known as 'the owners of the white' (*há'tki ipu'tcasi*). If the miko and vice-miko both died they appointed new ones. The one lying across toward the east was called the house of the women (*hu'ktagi i'ntcuka*). And that on the north side was called 'the house of the warriors' (*tástánálgí i'ntcuka*). They

³⁰ This has yellow flowers which appear at the time of the fall hunt.

³¹ The ceremonial square.

³² Probably by inadvertence the eastern structure is mentioned twice.

³³ The *taskah* or town "hot house."

173
539
361

173
539
•[361] were their war talkers (inhufupuna'ya). And behind the house, lying toward the south, they had what they called the tādjo. It was round; a ridge of earth was about its edge; and in the middle their ball post was erected. It was a source of amusement, and when it became dark they danced there through the night. The women danced with them.⁴⁰⁰

173
539
746 "And in the middle of summer at the time of the big harvest they met together at what was called the poskita, and they had what was called the 'big feast' on one day, when they went about eating until evening. The day after that they fasted, took medicine, and vomited it up, and they sat there until evening as moving about was prohibited. They remained there without sleeping until morning. And when they had sat through until the eighth morning, fire produced by boring with a stick was taken to each house.

"After that they considered what amusements they could institute. On the evening of the day of the 'all-day eating (hū'mpi isya'fkitā),' they danced what was called the gun dance (taputka-obānga). And if one had been treated by doctors he went to this dance with his body naked, the bullet wound painted red, and on his back the pay of the doctor, a back load.

"The next morning they kindled a fire by boring with a stick of 'slimy switch' (afo'slipakfa—the slippery elm), drank medicine which had been compounded there, and fasted; and they remained there fasting ceremonially, not eating any kind of food. And they were prohibited from eating meat, salt, and honey, and from touching women and children. When four days were passed they danced different kinds of dances. At noon they had the women dance by themselves the shooting dance⁴⁰¹ (its obānga), and afterward the men by themselves danced the long dance (obā'nga tēá'pko). The men and women together danced the old buffalo dance (yana's' atcu'li) holding sticks. The women also danced what was called the old dance (obānga atculi) with turtle-shell rattles tied to their legs. After dark the men and women danced [again and they kept it up] until morning. Then they went to their homes.⁴⁰²

173
539
746
526 "[Following the dances] they played what they called 'Shooting the ball' (puk' i'teita), holding two bent ball sticks with which they caught and threw the ball. And if they were going to bet, if two towns had dared provoke each other, they advanced to the meeting place, and when they got near they made a camp and stayed there until dark. [On each side] two men, one holding a drum, another a rattle, sat singing for them, the women standing behind them and dancing. Then the men kindled a fire and marched around it whooping and praising themselves continually. From time to

⁴⁰⁰ See pp. 174-190 for descriptions of the ceremonial grounds.

⁴⁰¹ Probably a mistaken translation. See p. 400.

⁴⁰² For descriptions of the poskita or break, see pp. 540-544.

614 had once been laid aside. According to one writer the Wind clan could take them up an indefinite number of times; according to another, four times. This privilege is well remembered. A single writer adds that people of the Bear clan were allowed to take the clubs up twice, but I have been able to learn nothing definite upon the subject from the living Indians. Local privileges connected with the busk ceremonial were, of course, enjoyed by other clans.²²

In other parts of America clan distinctions are indicated by means of face paintings or tattooings. With the Creeks, however, most of the latter seem to have had to do with war honors. I was told that members of the Raccoon clan painted circles about their eyes, but according to others this was done merely by doctors as a sign that they were able to see in the dark. Paintings used to indicate the towns of the persons using them will be considered presently.²³

Another source of information regarding the position of clans in the tribe is still to be tapped, but in order to do this we must first set forth a description of the Creek ceremonial or busk ground, the religious and social center of every Creek community of consequence.

DISTRIBUTION WITH REFERENCE TO THE LAND AND THE TOWN

174 Both the Creeks and the Texas-Alabama have told me that
 361 anciently clans lived apart, and in a Creek story of the origin of corn
 614 they are represented as scattered about in a number of different camps. Whether or not the major clans are descended from bodies of people which once lived in separate towns and lacked exogamy the local separation of the clans until very late times is an undeniable fact. I may note here the assertion of one of my oldest and best informants to the effect that in olden times the clans were not exogamous, but that upon one occasion a council was held and it was determined that afterwards they should be considered such. This is interesting as marking the native recognition of such a possibility, not as proving that the change actually took place. The Creek towns in the times when we begin to have knowledge of them consisted of a succession of villages or neighborhoods scattered through the woods and along the streams, and connected by a network of trails. The unit of such a town consisted of a group of houses owned by women of one clan and occupied by themselves, their husbands, and their young children. In practice it worked out something like this. A man, assisted by other members of his family or clan, might build a house in a new situation and clear the usual yard by hoeing up the surface weeds and grass for a considerable space about it. Now, when one of his daughters married her husband, drawn from some other, perhaps distant, locality, would build another house on part of the same

²² Cf. also Millert, *Mém.*, p. 234.

²³ See p. 245.

cleared space or in the immediate neighborhood where the pair would set up housekeeping. As his other girls married this process was repeated. When the children grew up the girls would continue to occupy the ancestral dwellings, or others erected for them in the neighborhood, while the boys would marry elsewhere. A man might erect and pay for a house and call it "my house," but it was to all intents and purposes the property of his wife. "My house" was a term applied by the Chickasaw to his clan as well as to his habitation.²² By a Creek male the word which has been translated into English as "home" (*hûti*) was not bestowed upon the house in which he and his wife lived, even though he might have built it himself, but on the houses in which lived the women of his clan. A woman's *hûti*, or "home," was indeed her home in our understanding of the term, except that the houses occupied by other women of the same clan were also her homes, but a man's *hûti* was not usually where he spent most of his adult life, but the home of his mother and the other women of his clan. In case a stranger visited the town and made known to what clan he belonged it was the duty of a man married into that clan to invite him to his house. In this case, although neither he nor his wife had set eyes on the man before, he would say to him "Come to your home (*hûti*)."²³ This duty of hospitality toward a fellow-clansman often brought men outside of the family proper under the same roof, whether they were welcome or not. Sometimes an old man whose children were grown up, or who for any reason was alone in the world, would travel about from one to another of the houses of his female kin. He would say, "Well, I am going to my home," and make for the house of someone who had never seen him before. In later times this struck the young people as very presumptuous, but it was the old law. In the days before there were hotels, restaurants, old peoples' homes, insurance, etc., it was a very convenient device. It not only served to provide for the old, infirm, and indigent, but enabled the adventurous to travel and see more of the world than would otherwise be possible.

The best early account of the arrangement of a Creek village and its dwellings, including also the position of the ceremonial grounds with reference to them, is given by Bartram, and I herewith append it along with the sketch accompanying (fig. 1). He says:

"The general position of the Chunk-Yard and Public Buildings of the Creeks, in respect to the dwellings of the Indians themselves, is shown in the following engraved plan:

"A is the Rotunda; B, the Public Square; C, the grand area or Chunky-Yard. The habitations of the people are placed with considerable regularity in streets or ranges, as indicated in the plan.

592
614

[574]

[888]

344
361

342 "The dwellings of the Upper Creeks [i. e., the Creeks proper, exclusive of the Seminole] consist of little squares, or rather of four dwelling-houses inclosing a square area, exactly on the plan of the Public Square. Every family, however, has not four of these houses; some have but three, others not more than two, and some but one, according to the circumstances of the individual, or the number of his family. Those who have four buildings have a particular use for each building. One serves as a cook room and winter lodging-house, another as a summer lodging-house and hall for receiving visitors, and a third for a granary or provision house, etc. The last is commonly two stories high, and divided into two apartments,

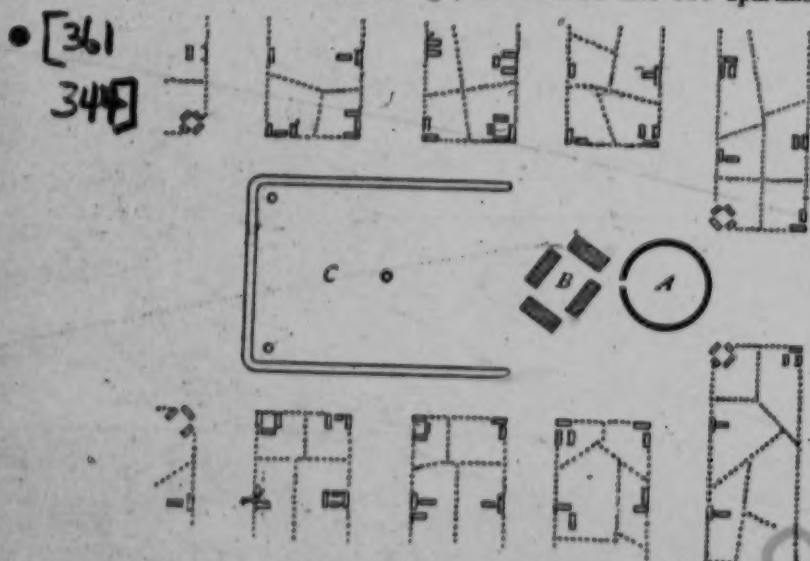


FIG. 1.—A typical Creek Council Ground or Busk Ground, showing its relation to the town.
(After Bauman.)

transversely, the lower story of one end being a potato house, for keeping such other roots and fruits as require to be kept close, or defended from cold in winter. The chamber over it is the council. At the other end of this building, both upper and lower stories are open on their sides; the lower story serves for a shed for their saddles, pack-saddles, and gears, and other lumber; the loft over it is a very spacious, airy, pleasant pavilion, where the chief of the family reposes in the hot seasons, and receives his guests, etc. The fourth house (which completes the square) is a skin or ware-house, if the proprietor is a wealthy man, and engaged in trade or traffic, where he keeps his deer-skins, furs, merchandise, etc., and treats his customers. Smaller

or less wealthy families make one, two, or three houses serve all their purposes as well as they can.

"The Lower Creeks or Seminoles are not so regular or ingenious in their building, either public or private. They have neither the Chunky-Yard nor Rotunda, and the Public Square is an imperfect one, having but two or three houses at furthest. Indeed they do not require it; as their towns are small, and consequently their councils just sufficient for the government or regulation of the town or little tribe: for in all great and public matters they are influenced by the Nation, or Upper Creeks.

"Their private habitations consist generally of two buildings: one a large oblong house, which serves for a cook room, eating-house, and lodging-rooms, in three apartments under one roof; the other not quite so large, which is situated eight or ten yards distant, one end opposite the principal house. This is two stories high, of the same construction, and serving the same purpose with the granary or provision house of the Upper Creeks."

Each of these groups of buildings was evidently occupied by one family, and we must suppose the houses of daughters—when they had establishments of their own, which was not always the case—were those adjoining in the same "block" or district. The houses of the more elaborate pattern have long been out of use and forgotten, with the removal of the Indians to Oklahoma (pl. 13, c). A corner of modest dimensions may still be found near some of the houses of the old type, and it is usually on the cleared space about the house. "The cookroom and winter lodging house" was the equivalent of the "hot house" of other writers, though the ancient form had perhaps been considerably altered. The ground plan of this house is usually described as roughly circular, but Romans, in comparing the dwellings of the Creeks with those of the Chickasaw and Choctaw, says: "They live nearly in the same kind of habitations as the two other nations already mentioned, except that their hot houses are not circular but oblong squares." In ancient times a public and a private house of this character were shared by both Creeks and Cherokee, but in later years they were to some extent given up by the Creeks, who did not feel the need of them so keenly in their comparatively warm climate, while the Cherokee held to them much longer.

Among the Alabama the yard (tā'āle), that anciently surrounded every house, was roughly square but was broader in front of and behind the house than at the sides. The yard was not fenced in primitive times but was sedulously cleared of grass by means of hoes. Otherwise it was thought that sickness was likely to attack the

household.

* Hartman in Trans. Am. Eth. Soc., vol. 22, pp. 26-27.
* Roman, Nat. Hist. E. and W. Florida, p. 62.

342

344
361
621

342

[77]

[351
784]

342 household. Sometimes the house had a porch in front, as is usually the case at the present day. The corncrib was in one part of the yard, it did not matter which, and, as in the case of the Creeks, houses were also put up there for married daughters of the house owner. His sons went elsewhere to live with their wives. When the husband of one of these daughters killed a deer he would send some of the meat to his father-in-law, but the several families did not cook at one fire or live in any sort of communism.

[592
606]

SEATING IN THE CEREMONIAL GROUNDS

When we consult the narratives of the De Soto expedition we find that they speak as if it were usual to find artificial mounds in the center of Indian settlements, the mounds sometimes bearing buildings. Garcilasso has the following to say regarding these:

"The town and the house of the cacique Omsachile were like those of all the other caciques of Florida. Therefore, without making a particular description of this place and this house, it seems proper to give only a general idea of all the capitals and all the houses of the chiefs of the country. I will say then that the Indians endeavor to place their towns upon elevated places. But because, in Florida, they rarely meet this sort of place where they can find the necessary conveniences to build, they raise themselves eminences in this manner. They choose a place where they bring a quantity of earth which they elevate into a kind of platform, two or three pikes high; the top of which is capable of containing ten or twelve or fifteen or twenty houses to lodge the cacique with his family and all his retinue. They then trace, at the bottom of this elevation, a square place conformable to the extent of the village which they would make; and around this place the most important persons build their dwellings. The common people lodge in the same manner; and thus they all environ the house of their chief. In order to ascend to it they draw, in a straight line, streets from top to bottom; each one fifteen or twenty feet wide, and unite them to each other with large posts, which enter very deep into the earth and which serve for walls to these streets. Then they make the stairs with strong beams which they put across, and which they square and join in order that the work may be more even. The steps of these stairs are seven or eight feet wide; so that horses ascend and descend them without difficulty. However, the Indians steepen all the other sides of the platform, with the exception of the stairs, so that they cannot ascend to it; and the dwelling of the chief is sufficiently strong."²²

Garcilasso's figures frequently need to be divided by from 5 to 10, but there may very well have been some such structure as this since we know that the houses of the Natchez chiefs were elevated on

²² *Misses's Garcilasso*, pp. 220-221.

171
361
342
344
622

mounds, along with their ossuaries, as well as the town houses of the Cherokee, though 10 to 20 houses are rather too many to assign to them. The main fact is confirmed, however, by Biedma, who, in speaking of the cross set up at Casqui, says "it is the custom of the Caciques to have near their houses a high hill, made by hand, some having the houses placed thereon."⁷⁷ This mound at Casqui is also mentioned by the Fidalgo of Elvas.⁷⁸ Ranjel says that the Spaniards set up a cross on the mound of a small village under a chief called Ichisi, somewhere in southern Georgia.⁷⁹ Further on he tells us that the "house of worship" of Talimeco, near the lower Savannah, was "on a high mound."⁸⁰ In speaking of the town of Uçita, in Florida, Elvas states that "the chief's house stood near the beach, upon a high mound made by hand for defence."⁸¹ Plazas or squares are also referred to several times. Elvas speaks of the town yard of Napetaca, the town yard of Achese, and the town yard of Chicaça.⁸² When the Spaniards entered Athahachi to meet Tascaluça, Ranjel says "the chief was on a kind of balcony on a mound at one side of the square."⁸³ These references show that at that time each town of any importance had a kind of public square and often a mound near by surmounted by public buildings or the residence of the chief. These references, but particularly the last, suggest the ancient arrangement of the Creek square ground as thus described by Bartram:

"The subjoined plan (fig. 2) will illustrate the form and character of these yards.

"A, the great area, surrounded by terraces or banks.

"B, a circular eminence, at one end of the yard, commonly nine or ten feet higher than the ground round about. Upon this mound stands the great *Rotunda*, *Hot House*, or *Winter Council House*, of the present Creeks. It was probably designed and used by the ancients who constructed it, for the same purpose.

"C, a square terrace or eminence, about the same height with the circular one just described, occupying a position at the other end of the yard. Upon this stands the *Public Square*.

"The banks inclosing the yard are indicated by the letters b, b, b, b; c indicates the '*Chunk-Pole*,' and d, d, the '*Slave-Posts*.'

"Sometimes the square, instead of being open at the ends, as shown in the plan, is closed upon all sides by the banks. In the lately built, or new Creek towns, they do not raise a mound for the foundation of their Rotundas or Public Squares. The yard, however, is retained, and the public buildings occupy nearly the same

⁷⁷ Bourne's *Narr. of De Soto*, vol. II, pp. 27-28.

⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 120.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 96.

⁸⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 161.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 23.

⁸² *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 44, 54, 122.

⁸³ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 120.

171
3610
342
344
622

344
361

positions in respect to it. They also retain the central obelisk and the slave-posts." "

The use of the mound, while partly no doubt for defense and to add dignity to the structures placed upon it, was very often in order to protect the buildings from spring floods and the general dampness. Some earlier Spanish statements suggest that perhaps even in the sixteenth century not all public buildings were placed upon mounds. Yet by analogy with the Cherokee town house and the lower Mississippi temple we may consider it probable that the arrangement set forth by Bartram was actually a very ancient one. It would seem

likely that the building called by Bartram the *rotunda* was once the most important element and that the public square was merely a summer-substitute suggested by a southern climate. Such an evolution of the Creek public buildings would bring them into line with those known to have existed among the Cherokee and the tribes of the Mississippi. A later evolution changed the relative position of the elements here brought together and finally resulted in an almost complete elimination of the mounds. We will continue with Bartram's description of the later square (fig. 3) which remained essentially as he represents it almost to the present day.

"This is the most common plan or arrangement of the Chunky-Yard Public Square, and Rotunda of the modern Creek towns.

"A, the Public Square or area.

"B, the Rotunda; a, the door opening towards the square; the three circular lines show the two rows of seats, sofas, or cabins; the punctures show the pillars or columns which support the building; c, the great central pillar, or column, surrounded by the spiral fire, which gives light to the house.

"C, part of the Chunky-Yard." "



FIG. 2.—Ancient pattern of Creek Ceremonial or Busk Ground. (After Bartram.)

¹ Bartram in *Trans. Am. Eth. Soc.*, vol. 22, pp. 81-83.

² *Ibid.*, p. 84.

423
621 The yard immediately about each house or group of houses of course went with it; the square ground; chunky yard, and hot house were the property of the community. Gardens, as Bartram has stated, could be cleared by anyone anywhere within the limits of the town land.¹⁰ And Eakins expresses their attitude toward the private ownership of land by the quotation, "It is for me, for thee, and for all." He adds, however, that improvements were sometimes sold.¹¹ This applied to the Creeks in their western home about the middle of the nineteenth century.

• 361 Regarding the town lands Stiggins says:

423
[224] "The inhabited parts of the nation are laid out into town districts designated from some creek, ridge, or point to some other noted point which boundary is organized into certain town corporated precincts under the moral guardianship of their *mic cul ga*."¹² The inhabitants of each town claimed an exclusive right to hunt in the territory immediately about it, and according to Stiggins men of one town approached another "with seeming diffidence, though the towns may be contiguously situated."¹³ At times an agreement was entered into by the members of a town to refrain from hunting in a certain territory for a definite period. A kind of taboo similar [784] to the device common among the Polynesians was laid upon it and it was called "ikána tcaka," "the sacred or consecrated land." At the expiration of the time fixed upon the people entered this tract and hunted there together. Bears were the chief animals which they expected to find.

241 The management of the large town fields is instructive. Bartram says of them:

"Every town or community assigns a piece of land as near as may be to the town, for the sake of convenience. This is called the *town plantation*, where every family or citizen has his parcel or share, according to desire or convenience, or the largeness of his family. The shares are bounded by a strip of grass ground, poles set up, or any other natural or artificial boundary, so that the whole plantation is a collection of lots joining each other, comprised in one enclosure or general boundary."¹⁴

These fields were planted and cultivated by the town working together, all attending to the several plots in turn. They harvested at the same time, but then each family harvested from its own plot. A part of the produce of each lot was placed in a public granary under the charge of the chief.

¹⁰ Bartram in Trans. Am. Eth. Soc., vol. III, p. 27.

¹¹ Eakins in Schoolcraft, Ind. Tribes, vol. I, p. 277.

¹² Stiggins, Ms. Hist. Narr., p. 14.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 19.

¹⁴ Bartram, op. cit., p. 20.

721
775

From Adair's account it will be seen that killing and scalping had a religious as well as a social basis, the former being the necessity the people felt themselves under—in this respect like the ancient Greeks—of placating the souls of the dead. There is every reason to think that ancient Creek belief was practically the same, but this side of the institution appears to have died first, the social advancement to be won through scalps being a more persistent motive.

• 361
712

In the most ancient times stockades, in which natural features were taken advantage of and which sometimes had moats, played a great part in warfare, especially in regions often harried by war parties. It is significant that the chroniclers of De Soto's expedition do not mention such structures until they reached the tribes near Tennessee River—i. e., the frontiers of the Muskogean peoples toward the north.⁴¹ In this quarter they were probably subject to incursions of Cherokee, Iroquois, and Shawnee and other Algonkian peoples. Stockades were again found along Alabama River, and from thence to the Mississippi—i. e., on the western Creek boundary. Ulibahali and a deserted town near it were stockaded, also Mabila, Chickasaw, and Alibamo.⁴² The following description of a stockade is given by Rangel:

"Three days march southeast of Tuasi (Tawasa) and two days before they came to Talisi (Tulsa) the Spaniards "came to an old village that had two fences and good towers, and these walls are after this fashion: They drive many thick stakes tall and straight close to one another. These are then interlaced with long withes, and then overlaid with clay within and without. They make loopholes at intervals and they make their towers and turrets separated by the curtain and parts of the wall as seems best. And at a distance it looks like a fine wall or rampart and such stockades are very strong."⁴³

Similar to this is Elvas's account of the stockade of Ulibahali. "The fence," he says, "which was like that to other towns seen afterwards, was of large timber sunk deep and firmly into the earth, having many long poles of the size of the arm, placed crosswise to nearly the height of a lance, with embrasures, and coated with mud inside and out, having loopholes for archery."⁴⁴

Methods of constructing fences of this character were well known throughout the Southeast, and Le Moyne gives what purports to be a picture of one seen in Florida, though it appears to be utterly unreliable.⁴⁵

411

When De Soto and his companions entered the temple, or rather ossuary, of Talimeco they found there "breastplates like corselets

⁴¹ Bourne, *Narr. of De Soto*, vol. II, pp. 15, 106.

⁴² *Ibid.*, vol. I, pp. 35, 90, 104, 106; vol. II, pp. 18, 24, 115, 122, 125, 130.

⁴³ *Ibid.*, vol. II, p. 115.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, vol. I, p. 85.

⁴⁵ This description is given in Bulletin 73, *Bur. Amer. Ethn.*, pp. 370-380. Cf. also Bulletin 43, *Bur. Amer. Ethn.*, pp. 122-124.

361, 345, 346, 778

Creek NN11

[Descriptions and diagrams of Creek town squares and square-ground buildings are filed in category 344]